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# NEWS

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## AHLQUIST TO DISCUSS CONTROVERSIAL DIVERSION PROJECT AT UM

Columbia River Basin water or Montana's water is a problem to be discussed by H.M. Ahlquist, director of the Washington State Department of Conservation in Seattle, in the last of the nine lecture series on water resources at the University of Montana Wednesday (March 8).

Dr. Richard L. Konizeski, UM professor of forestry, said Ahlquist's talk entitled "Facts and Fallacies of the NW-SW Diversion Concept" is presented by the UM Forestry School and will begin at 3 p.m. in Geology 107.

"If a waterway is an interstate stream and will float a canoe, it is federal water and is a national asset," Konizeski contends. However, crusaders for the project say either use it or lose it."

Konizeski raises the question whether "it is morally correct to use water to irrigate marginal land in downstream states? Is it right, or even economically defensible that Montana should willfully lose about one and a half million acre feet of water annually (worth about \$7.5 million) by the evaporation from the large federal reservoirs supposedly constructed to conserve water, while downstream states thirst for adequate supplies?" he asks.

According to Konizeski, Senate Document 97 sets out the basic object of Federal water planning "...to provide the best use or combination of uses of water and related land resources to meet all foreseeable short and long term needs." National economic development of each region within the country is essential to the maintenance of the national strength and the achievement of satisfactory levels of living."

Konizeski said the three pertinent questions to be discussed by Ahlquist which should clear up some of the skepticism about the water diversion project are: Can the Pacific Northwest states continue to pour our 140 million acre feet of Columbia River water into the Pacific Ocean each year while the seven southwestern states thirst for eight and a half million acre feet? Do the southwestern states really need the water? Finally will the United States be richer if it makes the diversion?